

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TORONT 00299 230143Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
/072 W

-----123583 230701Z /10

R 222147Z FEB 78
FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6930
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONZUL QUEBEC
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

UNCLAS TORONTO 0299

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, SCUL, CA
SUBJ: ONTARIO SPEECH FROM THRONE PROMISES EXPANDED
FRENCH LANGUAGES SERVICES

REF: TORONTO 298 (NOTAL)

1. IN THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE OPENING THE SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO ON FEBRUARY 21, 1978, PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS' MINORITY PROGRESSIVE IONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN THE PROVINCE, AN ISSUE WHICH HAS BECOME QUITE HEATED IN RECENT WEEKS AS THE OPPOSITION LIBERAL AND NDP PARTIES AND SOME OF THE MEDIA INSIST ON FRENCH BEING MADE AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE WHILE PREMIER DAVIS CONTINUES TO OPPOSE THE MEASURE.

2. AFTER REFERENCES TO THE PROMOTION OF HARMONIOUS RACE RELATIONS AND THE SUPPORT FOR MULTI-CULTURAL GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS, THE SPEECH STATED:

QUOTE: THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF FRANCO-ONTARIANS TO
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EDUCATION IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE HAVE LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED IN ONTARIO. FRANCO-ONTARIANS ALSO HAVE A COMMITMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE EXPANSION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH NEED AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION.

WE SHALL CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON THE STRONG FOUNDATION ALREADY LAID IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION TO

ENSURE THAT FRENCH-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL LEVELS, WHERE PRACTICABLE TO FRENCH-SPEAKING ONTARIANS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE EXPANSION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING PUPILS TO DEVELOP FRENCH-LANGUAGE CAPACITY REMAINS A PRIORITY.

DURING THIS SESSION, THERE WILL BE LEGISLATION TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE COURT TRIALS IN AREAS OF THE PROVINCE WHERE THIS SERVICE IS NEEDED. AMENDMENTS TO THE JUDICATURE ACT AND THE JURIES ACT WILL GUARANTEE THE STEPS TAKEN IN THIS DIRECTION. AS WELL, THE GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW PROPOSAL RELATED TO THE USE OF FRENCH IN REGULATORY AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS.

PRESENT GOVERNMENT TRANSLATION SERVICES WILL BE AUGMENTED TO MAKE MORE PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, PUBLICATIONS AND FORMS AVAILABLE IN BOTH FRENCH AND ENGLISH. OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE, A SPECIAL SECTION WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO BEGIN WORK ON TRANSLATING ONTARIO'S STATUTES INTO FRENCH.

ALL MINISTRIES WILL UNDERTAKE A PROGRAM TO IDENTIFY GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND GIVE HIGHWAY DIRECTIONS IN BOTH ENGLISH AND FRENCH IN PREDOMINANTLY FRANCOPHONE AREAS.

THE APPOINTMENT OF FULL-TIME CO-ORDINATORS OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES IN AN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF MINISTRIES WILL ENHANCE THE CAPABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT

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IN RESPONDING TO THE COMMUNITY. UNQUOTE

3. COMMENT-THE DAVIS GOVERNMENT IS OBVIOUSLY RESPONDING TO THE STRONG PRESSURES BROUGHT BY THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE TORONTO STAR AND TO QUEBEC REACTIONS TO THE REFUSAL TO MAKE FRENCH AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN ONTARIO. AT LEAST IN TORONTO, POPULAR PRESSURE ON THIS ISSUE IS ANYTHING BUT STRONG. IN THE HEAVILY POPULATED AREAS OF SOUTHERN ONTARIO, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, AMONG OLD AND NEW CANADIANS, THERE MAY WELL BE THE POTENTIAL OF BACKLASH SUGGESTED BY PREMIER DAVIS IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IN QUEBEC LAST WEEK.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, SPEECHES, OFFICIAL LANGUAGE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TORONT00299
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780083-0627
Format: TEL
From: TORONTO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780225/aaaaavft.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bd789ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TORONTO 298
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3513913
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ONTARIO SPEECH FROM THRONE PROMISES EXPANDED FRENCH LANGUAGES SERVICES
TAGS: PGOV, SCUL, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bd789ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014